

# The Necessity of a Comparative Study of Color Semantics in Modern Linguistic Typology (on the example of green and black colors)

Toshtemirova Sitora

PhD student, Karshi State University, Uzbekistan

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**Abstract:** This article substantiates the theoretical and practical necessity of a comparative-typological study of color semantics within the framework of modern linguistic typology. The role of color nomination in the linguistic picture of the world is explored, and the semantics of color are investigated on a scientific linguistic basis from a linguocultural perspective. While the distinguishing features of color semantics and the linguocultural analysis of universals common to many languages have served as a unifying factor in the comparative study of color semantics in modern typology, the semantic analysis of colors and the interpretation of their conceptual essence based on differential distinctions provide a foundation for defining this research as a significant contribution to the development of the field through their specific mutual semantization.

**Keywords:** Linguistic typology, color semantics, linguistic picture of the world, cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, semantic meaning, comparative analysis, comparative approach, universals, specificity.

**Introduction:** Linguistic typology, a principal branch of modern linguistics, is crucial for analyzing the linguistic landscape of the world. In this field, focusing on the semantics of color serves as a foundation for understanding the essence of signs known as colors in human linguistic thought. Colors are categorized through visualization and manifest in the human mind as both an aesthetic unit and a cognitively distinct "semiotism."

In the linguoculture of every nation, the semantics of color is embodied as a unique cultural code. This necessitates the study of the color system not only from a lexical perspective but also from cognitive and linguocultural ones. The advancement of modern linguistics, influenced by various factors such as digitalization, artificial intelligence, and the disciplinary expansion of the comparative-contrastive method, has laid the groundwork for studying the semantics of color-denoting words within a broad research scope. The comparative-typological study of color semantics across different language systems, which identifies universal and national-cultural characteristics in languages, has come to be recognized as a key feature

of this field. In our article, we will analyze the semantics of colors in different cultures directly from a linguistic standpoint within the framework of comparative-typological linguistics.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The semantics of color has been the object of numerous studies since ancient times. While philosophers have attempted to understand the essence behind colors, psychologists have studied their effect on the human psyche. Linguists, in turn, have focused on the linguistic features of the meaning reflected in colors. Specifically, C. P. Biggam [2], in her research titled "The Semantics of Colour," approaches the interpretation of meaning reflected in colors from a historical perspective. This work marked a turning point in the study of color semantics. As noted in the study [2, p. 12], the primary source for studying the semantic features expressed by colors was the theory of "Basic Color Terms," put forward by B. Berlin and P. Kay, which was published in the 1970s. This theory served as a basis for the author to determine how colors emerge in a language and what changes occur in their semantics over time.

Over time, the development of modern fields of linguistics has shifted its focus from merely historical approaches to the semantic nature of colors to the essence of their connection with human thought, psyche, the world of thinking - in general, the relationship between the "linguistic picture of the world" and "man." For instance, scholars such as M. Niazi, A. Ahmad, and M. Aftab [4, p. 2], in their study of color semantics, primarily concentrated on their psycholinguistic characteristics. In their research, they also put forward the following ideas: "Through the prism of colors, a person can not only imagine various objects but also assess the environment through unconscious psychological mechanisms and select appropriate words, vocabulary, sentence structures, or tones to describe their precise perception. Colors possess a certain effectiveness for gauging the ambient temperature, which consciously or unconsciously influences language and behavior." As can be seen, colors are perceived visually in the human mind and are re-synthesized in its thinking: color serves as a basis for the actualization of syntactic wholes in human language, such as a word, a lexical unit, a vocabulary collection, or a sentence.

V. Mishal [5] analyzed the symbols of color semantics as the primary object of research. The extent to which symbols represented by colors are reflected in their meaning was also examined. The author comparatively analyzes the symbolism reflected through colors in Russian and Czech linguocultures, noting that they are not merely visual information in human life, but a complex system that reflects reality through linguistic signs. Mishal also states that colors are a factor that profoundly impacts human emotions and mood. For example, the study puts forward ideas such as the "warm" nature of red, orange, and yellow; the presence of blue, green, and violet as symbols with a "cooling" effect in both the Russian and Czech cultures; and the fact that the color blue can have two different meanings simultaneously (on the one hand, as a symbol of tranquility and purity, and in some cases, expressing "depression" and "sorrow").

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, a set of several complementary methods was employed for the comparative-typological study of color semantics. Comparative-historical and comparative-contrastive analysis were selected as the methodological basis of the research. This method made it possible to determine the extent to which the scope of meaning of color names is similar or different in languages of different systems (for example, in Uzbek and English). The differential or generalizing feature of colors from different language systems directly created a foundation for drawing general

conclusions about them. Additionally, lexical-semantic analysis, componential analysis, and conceptual analysis methods were also utilized in the research process.

## DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Color is an integral part of the environment, being not only a natural dye but also a medium with its own specific meaning. In the "Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language," the lexeme "rang" (color) is defined as follows:

1. "A substance used for coloring; a dye or paint.
2. The primary means of expression and representation in painting.
3. The paint or glaze applied to objects.
4. The distinctive pigment or hue of something.
5. The degree of redness on a person's face; complexion" [9].

Therefore, it is evident that color is an external characteristic of every object, visualized directly in the human mind. The researcher A. Abdurahmonov notes that color adds additional meaning to the syntagma and the content of the text through the syntactic phonemes of the word [1, p. 154]. Thus, colors are not merely factors that express the external appearance of reality; they also function as a "medium" that enhances the meaning of a word, increases the emotional-expressive quality of the text, and carries its own specific semantic meaning.

### I. The Semantics of the Color Green

According to new and developing research in linguistics, the nomination of colors is considered one of the most important features of human development. There is also the view that the nominal basis of colors is directly related to the form and sign they represent. For instance, the idea that the color "yashil" (green) in the Uzbek language may be directly related to the words "yosh" (young/new) and "yashnamoq" (to flourish/thrive) is recognized as a topic of focus in many sources. In general, the greenness found in nature and its semantic meaning of "vital existence" are intrinsically linked with words like "yosh" (youth) and "yashillik" (greenness/verdure) in human cognitive thought. Mir Alisher Navoi, the sultan of the realm of words, also depicts the color green as a symbol of life's creation in his ghazal beginning with "Xil'atin to aylamish..." [8]:

Gulshan etdim ishq sahosin samumi ohdin,  
Kim esar ul dasht aro har yon qizil sorig', yashil.

As noted in the verse, green "awakens" the desert of love, causing it to transform into a "flower garden" as a result of the lover's sighs and laments. In this context,

green appears as the primary color of the garden - that is, as the fruit of life and love.

In Western linguoculture, the color green primarily plays a leading role in expressing subjective attitudes and social concepts. Compared to Uzbek, green in Western culture more often signifies concrete and material concepts (for example, ecology, finance, or security), whereas in Uzbek linguoculture, this color is more deeply imbued with abstract-spiritual, mystical,

and philosophical meaning.

The semantic field of the Russian lexeme "зелёный" (green) shares a universal correspondence with the meanings of "youth" and "vital awakening" found in Uzbek. For example, the Russian expression "зелёный юнец" [7] refers to a somewhat frivolous or immature person due to inexperience. Here, the concept of color serves as a powerful cognitive tool, directly expressing the semes of "youthfulness" and "unripeness."



**Figure 1. Meanings reflected in the seme of the color green**

Additionally, the color green has become established as a symbol of freedom and permission in the modern world. For instance, the meaning of a green traffic light as "the way is clear" or "permission to move" has become a universal and understandable linguistic code in global linguoculture today. At the same time, through combinations such as "Green transport" or "green economy," this color is also manifesting new functional meanings as a symbol of humanity's harmony with nature and global ecological sustainability.

Alternatively, in railway terminology, the phrase "Зелёная улица" (Zelyonaya ulitsa) [7] - or "green street" - which is actively used in the speech of railway industry representatives, refers to a situation where a green light is shown several times in a row to prioritize the transport of important cargo or during emergencies while the train is in motion.

It should also be noted that in Uzbek linguistics, the

phenomenon of polysemy is evident in the expression of the color green. In many sources (particularly in speech pragmatics), instances of the word \*ko'k\* (blue) being used instead of the lexeme for green can be observed, including: \*ko'k choy\* (green tea), \*ko'k manti\* (dumplings with greens), \*ko'k o'tloq\* (green meadow), and so on. In the work \*Qutadg'u Bilig\*, however, the complete opposite of this situation is found; that is, there are places where the word \*yashil\* (green) is used instead of the word \*ko'k\* (blue):

Azure sky - yashil ko'k (yashil kök)

Such phenomena are numerous in our language. The etymology of the word can be cited as the main factor for the emergence of this situation: in the periods of the ancient Turkic language, specifically the 5th-7th centuries, the word for green did not exist, and the word "ko'k" was used in its place. Later, the lexeme for gray was used interchangeably with "ko'k" (with the same meaning), and in recent times, the linguistic unit

"yashil" (green) began to be actively used in everyday speech.

## II. The Semantics of Black

The quality of black also manifests within linguistics as an expression with a distinct sign and seme. According to physical principles, the color of objects that have no light is called black, or the absence of a small amount or almost no light reaching the eyes is called darkness. It should also be noted that the color black has been used to express various cultural codes in the cultures of different peoples. However, in the semantics of the word "qora" (black), a negative connotation is predominantly established (in the Uzbek language), for example:

**Qora kuchlar (Black forces)** - forces associated with magic and sorcery.

**Qora niyat (Black intent)** - a bad, evil intention.

In the English language, the semantics of the color black also include a negative connotation. For instance, along with its meaning as a color, its seme of "stain" or "blemish" is also relevant to English linguoculture. Additionally, English-speaking cultures have the concept of "Black Friday" [6], the Uzbek equivalent of which is "qora juma." This is considered the biggest shopping and discount day of the year, celebrated in the United States on the Friday after Thanksgiving. The characterization of this day as "Black" is linked to two factors:

a) In older forms of accounting, a store's losses were typically written in red ink, while profits were written in black ink. A store's operations that had been "in the red" throughout the year turned "black" on Black Friday, meaning they became profitable. Therefore, in this context, "Black Friday" meant "profitable Friday." In modern Uzbek, the concept of "Black Friday" is becoming equivalent to "Barakali juma" (Blessed/Fruitful Friday). However, unlike the historical origin of the term in English, in Uzbek this expression is associated with the principles of Islam. This is because, in the religion of Islam, Friday is considered a sacred and blessed day.

b) The second factor is related to the disorder that occurred in Philadelphia in 1960. On that day, the Friday after Thanksgiving in 1960, the traffic jams that occurred on the city streets began to be referred to negatively by the police as "Black Friday."

However, literature notes that in addition to the negative meaning reflected in the word "black," a positive meaning also exists. For example, in Uzbek linguoculture, black is interpreted as a symbol of grandeur and greatness. The "qora" (black) lexicon is also present in the names of certain clans from

historical periods, such as the Qarakhanids. In English, the word "black" also expresses positive semantics; for instance, "in the black" signifies being free from financial crisis in business activities; a "black dress" is a symbol of seriousness, professionalism, high elegance, and taste; and the term "black and white" used in contracts indicates that the established rules are recorded in writing and are based on clarity. In the Russian language, a positive connotation is also noticeable in the seme of black; for example, "черная икра" (black caviar) [7] has historically been used in Russian culture, primarily as a sign of wealth and a symbol of luxury.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the comparative typology of color semantics is one of the most interesting and promising fields in modern linguistics. Through colors, one can see the richness and diversity of language and the boundless nature of human thought. A comparative-typological analysis of the green and black colors across different languages enables the identification of both universal and national-cultural features within language systems. The results of this research will not only serve as a theoretical conclusion but will also provide an important practical basis for creating modern terminological dictionaries, improving the theory of literary translation, and effectively organizing intercultural communication in the context of globalization. Studying the rich potential of language through colors opens a new methodological path to understanding just how diverse and infinite the human cognitive world is.

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